

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. General Remarks

Please consider the application in view of the following remarks.

II. Disposition of Claims

Claims 23-44 are pending in this application. In this Response, claim 24 has been amended and claim 26 has been canceled.

III. Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has advised that certain references provided in information disclosure statements of April 21, 2004 and April 14, 2006 were not legible. Applicants will provide more legible copies if available.

IV. Specification

The Examiner has objected to the title of the invention as not descriptive. Applicants have amended the title herewith.

V. Double Patenting

The Examiner has provisionally rejected claims 24, 26, 33, and 37-39 as unpatentable over claims 59, 65, 88, 95, 123, 151, and 178 of copending Application No. 10/933,560. The conflicting claims have not been patented.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections but expect to cancel these listed claims in 10/933,560 during prosecution of that patent application for reasons to be stated or indicated in that prosecution. As a result, such cancellation may render this provisional rejection moot. In the event the Examiner believes that the provisional rejection should stand in light of new claims filed in 10/933,560, Applicants will submit a terminal disclaimer.

VI. Claim Rejections—35 USC § 102

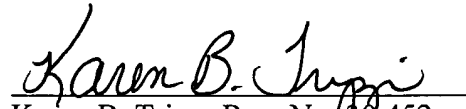
The Examiner has rejected all pending claims 24, 26, and 33-39 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,691,281 to Ashjian. Specifically, the Examiner has stated that:

Ashjian teaches a method of drilling a wellbore comprising circulating a drilling mud comprising an invert emulsion (Column 1 Lines 5-65) comprising a base composed of a blend of 5 to 80 weight percent (Column 6 Lines 23-27) of a long chain isomerized olefin of at least 18 carbon atoms (Column 3 Lines 26-41) and 50 to 90 weight percent of n-paraffins, iso-paraffins and cycloparaffins of 10 to 18 carbon atoms (Column 3 Lines 51-59 and Column 6 Line 38-Column 7 Line 6).

In traversing these rejections, Applicants have amended independent claim 24 to further distinguish and define their invention. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to enter the amendments and to allow the application to proceed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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